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Photo by] [*Neville Edwards.*

THE HARBOUR AT ESQUIMAULT.

NAVAL BASES OF THE EMPIRE:

ESQUIMAULT AND HALIFAX.

BY C. DE THIERRY

ESQUIMAULT, the key of the North Pacific, is the least known of all the great Naval Bases of the Empire. Seeing that it is the creation of the past twenty years, it has no history, and British Columbia, of which it is the sentinel, is a new country acquired by peaceful development. So remote was it from the world, indeed, that, until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many people believed it to be part of the United States, and responsible peliticians and journalists urged it to become so as speedily as possible. Fortunately for the British Empire, the Dominion's views were wider and her vision clearer. Otherwise the dream of the Republic since its inception would have been realised, and Canada included in the Union. Even so late as 1869, her minister, at a public banquet in England, referred to it as a certainty, and, in a Committee Report of the Senate in the same year, it was stated as an argument in favour of subsidising the Union Pacific, that its construction would "seal the destiny of the British possessions." Two years before, Alaska was ceded to the United States on the express understanding that she was "to close up her coast to 54° 40′," or, in other words, to shut England out from the North Pacific. But the genius of Sir John Macdonald proved more than a match for the diplomacy of St. Petersburg and Washington. With the Confederation of British North America, and the creation of the iron road, which is its material expression, the plan to drive England from the Western Hemisphere came to nothing. On the other hand, she had enormously strengthened her position in the ocean of the future.

For Esquimault is the fortified gateway of the only territory between Cape Horn and Behring Sea over which floats the Union Jack. That is to say, the British Empire has no foothold on the Western shores of America from Pole to Pole, except in British Columbia. Between it and Hong Kong, to the westward, rolls 5,936 miles of ocean; between it and Fiji, to the southward, 5,100 miles. Its chief port, Victoria, has the advantage of every other on the Pacific coast, as San Francisco long ago discovered to its cost. In the first place, it is connected with Canada and Europe by a transcontinental railway under one head, whereas its American rivals are handicapped by transcontinental railways under a complex system of control. In the second place, British

The preceding articles in this series dealt respectively with Gibraltar, Malta, Bombay and Trincomalee, Singapore and Hong Kong, Sydney and Auckland. Ensuing articles will be devoted to Capetown and the West Indies.

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Columbia possesses inexhaustible stores of the only serviceable coal west of the Rockies. In the third place, the Kuro Siwo, a current which sets out from Japan across the North Pacific, gives ships sailing from the far East to Victoria an advantage of forty-eight hours over ships sailing to San Francisco. For these and other reasons, the former is destined to play a great part in the development of trade with the Orient by way of the Pacific. By means of it, Canada is able to hold out one hand to Australasia, and the other to England. It is thus one of the most vital links in our Imperial world-chain.

Esquimault, which guards it, is situated at the most southerly part of Vancouver Island, and just within the Strait of San Juan de Frica, which is American on one side, Canadian on the other. It is dotted with beautiful islands, wooded to the water's edge as are its bold and rocky shores. In the distance rise up the snow-capped Olympian Mountains. The harbour of Esquimault is worthy of such a fine setting. It is land-locked, nobly proportioned, and so safe that it can be entered at any hour of the day or night. Owing to the tenacious blue clay of its bottom, ships find excellent anchorage, while its average depth of forty-five feet floats the leviathans of the British Navy. Unlike any other fortress-station on the great trade routes of the world, Esquimault is little more than a village, which is due less to its recent origin than to its position in relation to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, from which it is distant only three miles. In time, no doubt, they will be incorporated. Between them and Vancouver City, on the mainland, is the Strait of Georgia, at this point seventy-six miles wide.

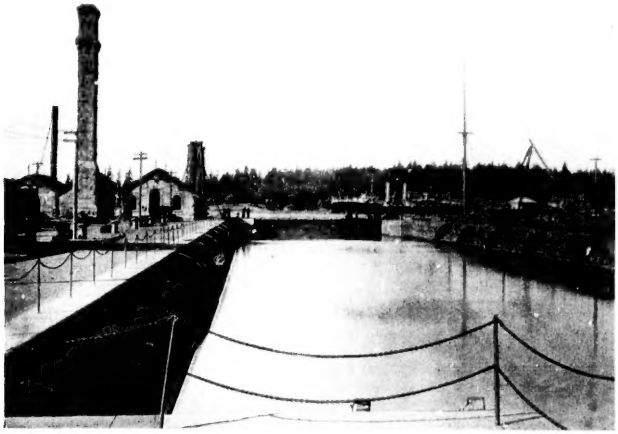

Photo by] *[Neville Edwards.*

ESQUIMAULT DRY-DOCK, WITH THE "ROYAL ARTHUR" IN THE BACKGROUND.

The destinies of these three outposts of the Dominion are inseparably linked. Two of them are the creation of the iron road flung across the North American Continent by Canada, and the third can trace much of its prosperity to the same source. Before 1886, British Columbia was cut off from the rest of the world by the impassable barrier of the Rocky Mountains and the vast wilderness beyond. By sea it was distant from Quebec 16,000 miles, traversed only by sailing-ships; by land, 3,000 miles, traversed for the greater part only by the Indian and the trapper. When the last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway was driven into the ground, instead of being the most remote, it was one of England's nearer Colonies. In truth the discovery of gold in the valley of the Fraser, and quick communication, were the making of British Columbia. Its development was phenomenal. Within the short space of twenty-five years it was a Fur Country, a Crown Colony, a self-governing Colony, and a Province of the Dominion. In 1842, Victoria was founded as a trading-post. In 1887, Vancouver had no existence. Esquimault, until lately, was little more than a safe anchorage for the ships of war that patrolled the North Pacific. To-day, the first is a thriving port with 23,658 inhabitants. The second is only second to the first, with a population of 27,198. The third is as vital to British power in the Pacific as Port Arthur was to Russia before the war.

Esquimault is connected by rail with the coal-mines of Nanaimo. It has a fine dry-

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Photo by] [*Valentine, Dundee.*

HALIFAX.

dock, which admits the largest ships afloat, a naval hospital, an arsenal, stores, and a repairing-shop. It is strongly fortified, and garrisoned by Canadian troops. The cost of maintaining it has been borne by the Dominion Government since last year.

Victoria is the home port of the sealing fleet, and its shores are lined with the wharves of great shipping companies, which, it must be remembered, trade only in the Pacific. Of these the most important is the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company, whose fine steamers have done so much to develop the Dominion's relations with the Far East. In war time they can be turned into cruisers for the British Navy. There is also communication with Australia, but so far it has been hampered by circumstance. Now that the success of the Pacific Cable is assured, however, and the Imperial

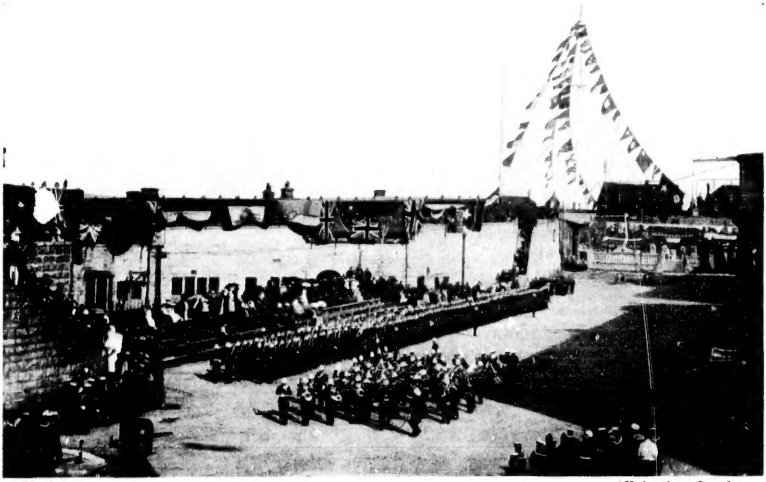

Photo by] [*Valentine, Dundee.*

INTERIOR OF THE CITADEL, HALIFAX.

Conference has agreed to provide a fast service between England and Australia by way of Canada, great things may be expected on this route before long. Between Vancouver and Victoria there is a daily service of ferry boats, and between them and Alaska, California, the Fraser River, and Puget Sound ports, communication is frequent and regular. But unlike any other of the Empire's great commercial *entrepôts*, Victoria is not cosmopolitan, perhaps because it is only in its infancy.

The future of this trio of cities is assured. Behind them is a province with untold wealth in gold, coal, iron, and other minerals; fisheries, timber, and furs. Facing it across the ocean is the Orient; north of it, the Yukon Eldorado. It stands midway between England and Australia. Its climate is healthy, and owing to the mild influence of the Kuro Siwo, the Gulf Stream of the Pacific, it is pleasant to live in. As a summer resort the Island of Vancouver is unsurpassed. The forests are full of game, the waters teem with fish, the scenery is magnificent, the roads in the neighbourhood of Esquimault are excellent either for driving or cycling, and beautiful with luxuriant hedges and gardens. Victoria is unique, inasmuch as it stands out from wooded hills, snow-capped mountains, and glittering arms of the sea. Like all cities on the Pacific littoral, it has a Chinese quarter, and is beginning to be nervous of a Japanese invasion. For years the labour of these ubiquitous Orientals was a necessity in British Columbia, and even now as domestic servants, laundrymen, and factory hands they carry all before them.

If the western sentinel of the Canadian Pacific Railway is the newest of the Empire's strong places, Halifax, its eastern sentinel, is one of the oldest. It is the capital of Nova Scotia, which was discovered by Cabot in 1497, and for a hundred years was one of the battle-grounds of England and France in their struggle for North America. Halifax itself was not founded until 1749, eleven years before the final expulsion of the French from the mainland of the continent. Its early inhabitants were picked men, mostly soldiers and sailors with their families, who were sent out from the Mother Country under Lord Cornwallis. They were afterwards joined by bodies of American Loyalists, the first Imperialists of the British Empire as we know it now. The settlement was called Halifax in honour of the Earl of Halifax, at that time President of the Board of Trade and Plantations. In the campaign which ended in the death of Wolfe and capture of Quebec, the American Revolution, and the war of 1812–14, it was the principal base of operations for the British fleet.

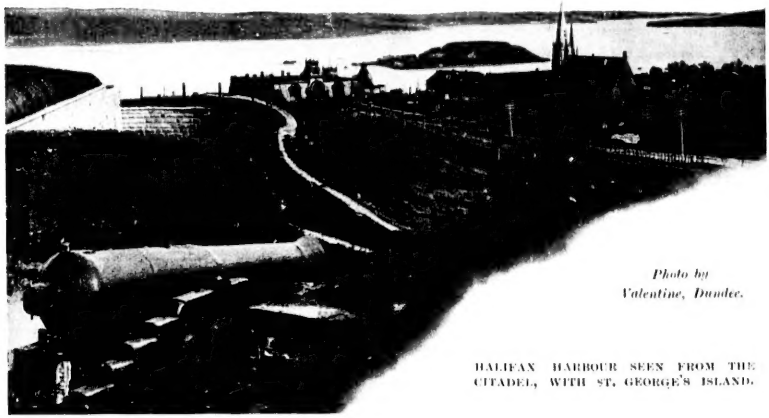

Photo by Valentine, Dundee.

HALIFAX HARBOUR SEEN FROM THE CITADEL, WITH ST. GEORGE'S ISLAND.

Until the latter end of the eighteenth century, Halifax was the seat of Government or all the Maritime Provinces. Its Parliament House, a massive pile of granite, has therefore one of the finest collections of portraits in the Dominion. No other city in the Empire outside England is rich in memories of so many distinguished Englishmen, no other

Colonial State has given so many distinguished men to the Imperial service as Nova Scotia. The Duke of Kent, grandfather of King Edward, was twice stationed at Halifax, the second time as Commander-in-Chief of the forces in British North America. Under his administration defensive works were pushed vigorously forward, St. George's Church was built, and many necessary improvements were made. Unfortunately the house in which he lived on Bedford Basin is a ruin. Here, too, served Prince William, afterwards the Sailor King, the late Duke of Edinburgh, and Lord Nelson. Admiralty House, which stands on a hill overlooking the harbour, is associated with the names of the Earl of Dundonald, Sir Houston Stewart, and Sir Alexander Milne, all gallant sailors. Nova Scotians who reflected glory on their country are many. Among them were Admirals Sir Provo Wallis and Sir Edward Belcher, General Williams, the hero of Kars, and Sir John Inglis, the defender of Lucknow, Welsford and Parker, whose heroism in the Crimean war is commemorated by a monument in front of St. Mary's Cathedral, and Samuel Cunard, the founder of the first steamship service across the Atlantic.

Photo by] [*Valentine, Dundee.*

THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, HALIFAX.

As Esquimault is situated on that part of North America which bends out towards Asia, so Halifax is situated on that part of the coast which bends out towards Europe. It is built on a peninsula formed by the North West Arm, a river-like inlet of the sea, and Bedford Basin, a lake-like expanse of water, ten square miles in extent. In natural strength it is second only to Quebec and Gibraltar, and in the beauty of surroundings it surpasses either. The harbour perhaps possesses more advantages than any other in the world. While it opens directly on the Atlantic, it is protected by McNab's Island at the entrance. It is easy of access at all times. The difference in the rise and fall of the tide is comparatively small. It has good holding-ground, no rocks and shoals, and a uniform depth from ten to twelve fathoms. It is,

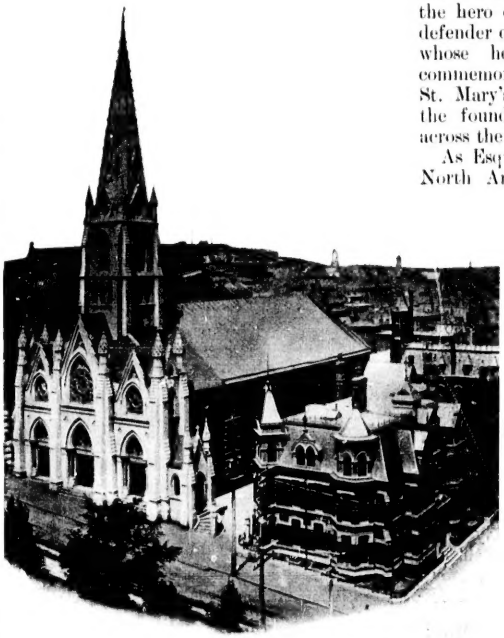

Photo by] [*Valentine, Dundee.*

ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL, AND GLEBE HOUSE, HALIFAX.

Photo by] [*Valentine, Dundee*

HALIFAX VIEWED FROM ST. GEORGE'S ISLAND

moreover, nearer to Liverpool by one to two days than any other Canadian or American port, and, unlike Montreal and Quebec, is ice-free practically the year round.

This noble harbour is, therefore, the chief winter port of the Dominion. It is connected with Montreal by the Intercolonial railway, 750 miles long, and as this connects with the Canadian Pacific Railway, Halifax is in direct communication with the rest of the Continent. It is also a cable centre, lines radiating to Britain, Bermuda, and the West Indies, across Canada, and, ultimately, across the Pacific to Australasia. Its facilities for coaling are excellent. Good bunker coal, afloat and in trucks, is always available to run on to piers and chutes provided for the purpose. Besides four marine railways, capable of hauling vessels under 2,000 tons burden, is a large graving-dock of stone, 600 feet in length. As the most important Naval Station in the Western Hemisphere, it is fully equipped, and so formidable are its fortifications that it is practically impregnable from the sea. At the entrance of the harbour are York Redoubt, Fort Ogilvie, and Fort Clarence; in mid-channel are the islands of St. George and McNab, bristling with all the latest engines of war. At other strategical points, particularly in the park, powerful guns are mounted, so that in attempting to enter the harbour an enemy's ship would be exposed to a murderous cross-fire.

The most striking feature of Halifax is the Citadel, which crowns a hill rising gently from the water's edge. The massive walls defy assault, the barracks within are bomb-proof, guns of the latest pattern sweep city and harbour. The original Citadel works were begun by the Duke of Kent, but since his time endless changes and additions have been made, until it is now a fortress worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with Gibraltar and Malta. In the vicinity are Admiralty House, Wellington Barracks, and the railway station. Until the outbreak of the South African war, Halifax was the only city in the Dominion in which the red coat of the British soldier was a familiar sight. Sir Wilfred Laurier then offered to raise a garrison of Canadians, thereby releasing an English regiment for the front. Last year this arrangement was made permanent.

From the Citadel the view is superb. Behind roll out fertile green plains, dotted with white cottages and bounded by undulating ranges of hills. Directly opposite is Dartmouth, a small town picturesquely situated at the base of verdant, well-wooded hills, and lengthened shorewards with the villa residences of Halifax merchants. Below are the ships of His Majesty's Navy riding at anchor, and the ships of the twenty lines of steamers which regularly trade with the port. And everywhere water is a feature of the landscape. In the distance is the heaving Atlantic, nearer at hand is the harbour running to a point called the Narrows, beyond which it opens out into Bedford Basin, surrounded by lofty pine-clad hills. From another point of view spreads out the most beautiful park on the North American Continent. At the extremity of the

peninsula on which Halifax is built, it has water on three sides, and though there is no attempt at cultivation, the art of man is entirely in harmony with Nature. Seven miles of roads have been laid out with wonderful taste, the original beauties of the park having been preserved to an almost unique degree. Woodpaths wind through nooks as wild as any to be found in the heart of the mountains, and here and there the pine trees have been cut away to permit glimpses of the water. At times, however, the stranger is startled to come upon a battery, or to find himself under the walls of a fort. And herein, until a few years ago, lay much of the charm of Halifax. It was a Colonial town in which one could never forget the might of England. That is to say, it was a combination of the provincial and the Imperial. The symbols of Empire were everywhere—in the shops with the Royal Arms, the bright uniforms of the soldiers, the sentinels pacing to and fro in front of a Government building or wharf, a staff officer on duty in scarlet and gold, the sailors with their trim suits and jaunty air. But since the Redistribution of the Fleet, and the transference from the Home to the Canadian Government of responsibility for the defences of Esquimault and Halifax, all this is becoming a thing of the past.

The historical associations of Halifax are extremely interesting. Here was signed the Proclamation which drove the rebellious Acadians from their homes as wanderers and exiles, a story idealised by Longfellow in "Evangeline." To this port sailed the British frigate *Shannon*, proudly towing the American frigate *Chesapeake*, which was manned by the finest crew the Yankees ever mustered. Along the shores of Bedford Basin rise up the camps, hospital, and a cemetery of the French Armada despatched in 1746 to "conquer the North American coast from Newfoundland to Virginia." It was dispersed, not by British valour, but by terrific storms, only two men-of-war and a few transports reaching Halifax. The Admiral died of a broken heart, his successor committed suicide shortly afterwards, and a thousand of their men died of disease. A second Fleet which set to sea with the same object was scattered by a hurricane.

Saturday is the great market-day of Halifax, and it is the day when the life of the city is seen in its most picturesque and varied aspect. Among the sellers the most striking are the negroes, the Micmac Indians, and the Acadians, descendants of the French, who wandered back to the old home. The "Green Market," which is densest near the Post Office, is also novel on account of the horned cattle harnessed to carts in which many of the country people carry their produce. From an early hour in the morning the footpaths are lined on either side of the road with white and coloured people, who travel many a weary mile with baskets, fancy work, vegetables, fruit, and flowers. Men, women and children sit or squat beside their little stalls, while the good people of Halifax buy in the same leisurely way. As becomes a town with a tradition a growth of a century and a half, and a future, it is more dignified than hurried.

The climate of the Province is severe in winter, hence the origin of the nickname of a Nova Scotian is "Blue-nose." The summer

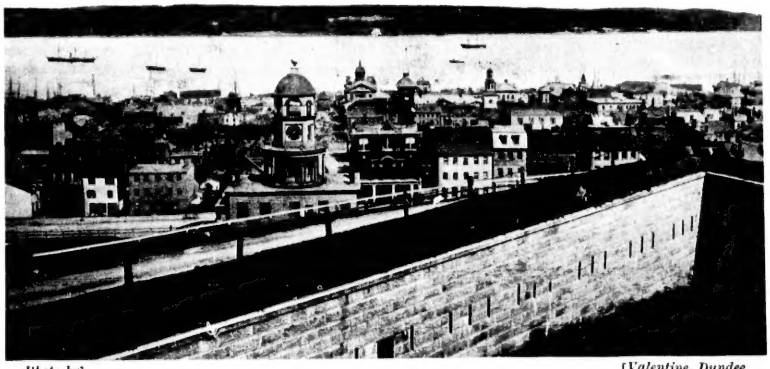

Photo by] [*Valentine, Dundee.*

HALIFAX VIEWED FROM THE WEST.

is no warmer than it is in England, and fogs are common. The most delightful season of the year is the autumn, when the days are soft and balmy, and the nights cool and fragrant. The parks and gardens and woods are then gorgeous in russet and scarlet and gold, and the sunsets are at their finest. The Americans call this ideal time the Indian summer, and nowhere is it more entrancingly lovely than in Nova Scotia.

Whether or not Halifax becomes the terminus of a fast Atlantic service, its extensive area, the length of its water frontage, its railway and telegraphic facilities, its magnificent harbour, its strategical position, and accessibility the year round, will always give it a high place among the ports of the Dominion. As a Naval Station, "The Cronstadt of America," it has no rival in the Western Hemisphere, for in addition to its other advantages it can draw on unlimited supplies of excellent steam coal. As in the North Pacific so in the North Atlantic, England is provided with a window and a fortress. Between them is the most vulnerable frontier of the British Empire, the Indian frontier alone excepted. For its defence, however, the Dominion is responsible, and as she was equal to the task in 1812–14, so she will be again should occasion arise. For what Australasia is to the South Pacific she is to the North Pacific and the North Atlantic. Unfortunately she has one of the Great Powers on her flank. Hence the strength of Halifax.

"ENGLAND'S WEALTH." BY EDWIN DOUGLAS.

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